THE FREE-THINKER's ANSWER TO His FRIEND THE QUAKER's LETTER.

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The Free-Thinker's Answer, &c.

Esteemed Friend,

LET not your Meekness start or be disturbed at the Appellation I give myself; for to think justly and without Prejudice is thinking freely: And therefore I may be admitted to an Intimacy with any thing but Hypocrisy.

In the Fulness of thy Heart the Spirit has broke from thee, but Expression has not compleated thy Intentions. And therefore I shall in a friendly Way give Utterance to thine inmost Soul: And tho' I shall make use of the Language of the Oracle of the Profane, yet the Lambs of the Lord have a Right to avail themselves of all Things.

'Friends, Countrymen, Fellow-Idlers and Pot-'Companions, I exhort you all in the Name of Riot 'to give Ear to my Words, and Attention to my 'Sayings; behold, the Sages of the Land and the 'Chief Magistrate are in Combination to suppress 'Idleness, and destroy our noble Liberty of Carouz-'ing and Caballing, each Man from being a Prince 'in Politicks must return to his usual Occupation, and 'sink into that Retirement which leaves him only So-'briety, Industry and Application to Business to subsist 'upon. If therefore, Friends, we mean to exert our *just 'Rights*, acquired by *lucky Times*, and now established by

* *Machiavel's* Plebeian.

'by *Cuſtom*, we muſt redouble our Application and 'Artifice, to allure and engage more Companions to 'our Party. Tho' ſmall faults are revenged, great 'ones are generally rewarded; and to us a *univerſal* 'Calamity is more ſupportable than a *private*. Nor 'is there any Difficulty to diſcourage us. The 'Enterprize to me ſeems eaſy and certain. Thoſe 'that ſhould oppoſe us are rich and indolent, and di-'vided by Pride and Ambition. Their Diviſions will 'give us the Victory, and their Riches ſhall maintain 'it: For it is nothing but Poverty and Riches that 'diſcriminates between us; ſtrip them naked, and 'you are as good as they.

'It troubles me to think that there are ſome irre-'ſolute and Apprehenſive of the Conſequences of a 'general Diſturbance. Neither Conſcience or Diſ-'grace ought to deter you; they that overcome (let 'the Means be what they will) are never troubled 'with Diſhonour, and for Conſcience you ought not 'to be concerned: The fear of Labour, Famine, 'Death or Priſons is too pregnant, to leave room for 'the Apprehenſions of Hell; Obſerve the Way and 'Progreſs of the World; you will find the Rich, the 'Great and the Potent arrive at Wealth and Gran-'deur and Authority by Violence and Fraud; and 'when once they are poſſeſs'd, you ſee with what 'Confidence and Security they gild over the Baſe-'neſs of their Uſurpations, with the unjuſt Title of 'Acqueſts. On the other Side, thoſe whoſe Sottiſh-'neſs affrights them from our Courſes, what becomes 'of them? They are conſumed in Servitude and Po-'verty; Good Men are always badly provided for: 'The moſt fraudulent and rapacious ſooneſt free 'themſelves from Bondage. Now is your Time; 'the Commons are irreſolute, Suſpicion is working 'among the Chiefs: Time has Wings, Opportunity 'flies away, and is never to be reclaimed, whoever 'begins firſt is ſure to prevail, to the Ruin of their 'Enemies, and the Exaltation of themſelves.'

This,

This, Friend, I take to be agreeable to the Intention of thy Letter, and others of the ſame Style from *Cork*.

But my Thoughts differ widely from thine, I ſhall only premiſe, that there is a great Difference between a reſolute and honeſt Defence of the Rights of a Country by a ſteady Oppoſition to a bad Adminiſtration, and throwing the Country you would ſave and defend, into Anarchy and Confuſion. A true Patriot is, of all the human Species, the nobleſt Work of God, and implies every magnanimous, and every benevolent Act: If his Fortitude defends Society, the Preſervation of every Citizen muſt be his Care; for Parts compound the Whole; His Acts muſt be diſpaſſionate, tho' his Breaſt has every Paſſion in full Perfection, and Paſſions are the Elements of Life. The near Approaches of a Patriot to Perfection, make him not vain: From ſelf Examination he knows the Errors and Follies he has and may be liable to; therefore he is never aſſuming, but compaſſionates his fellow Creature's Failings, and will not damn, or give his fellow-Creatures up for one, perhaps, miſtaken Act. He is ſolicitous to ſave, not hurry to Perdition, his weak Brother: But like Heaven opens his Arms to a repenting Sinner, ſhews him the Good he miſs'd, and his own Happineſs that Evil did not prevail. Thus Experience makes good Men at laſt, and the Publick enjoys the Gain.

Moderation is the Characteriſtick of a true Patriot: And Prudence, wiſdom and Experience make him an Enemy to Faction. He clearly diſtinguiſhes between thoſe Men and thoſe Actions that have a regular Tendency to Publick Good, and that noiſy Turbulency that means only to avail itſelf of Diſtreſs and Confuſion, by ſetting Father againſt Son, Brother againſt Brother, and univerſal Enmity thro' all Mankind. What Man ever ſet his Houſe on Fire as a Means to regulate his Domeſtic Oeconomy by a better Light?—If none, then Times of Peace and Tranquility

quility alone reſtore order to State, and he that means no more than good, will ſeek to do it without Malice or Ill-will to any one, will cenſure with Decency, and puniſh the Criminal with compaſſionate Reluctance, and not ſatiate Revenge with the Misfortunes and Miſeries of his fellow Creatures?

Are all theſe Things true?—No one dare ſay me nay. What wou'd you then?—Cry Havock, and let looſe the Dogs of War and ſpread Diſſention thro' a wretched Land! Unhinge each Social Axis of the State and make Mankind to dread each other's Form!—And all for what? That bold Ambition may aſſume the Sway, ride in the Whirlwind and direct the Storm, or, in more vulgar Phraſe, when the Pot boils, the Scum will riſe to the Top. Skim it then; but don't boil away the Subſtance. I tell thee, Friend, thy Labourers have thraſhed well in thy Barn, is it not fit to winnow the Corn, pick out the Tares and blow off the Chaff, and lay up the Grain for uſe; or ſhall your Labourers ſay, Maſter, we have ſweated hard and, therefore let us poſſeſs thine Houſe and Lands, and manage every future Crop. Thou wouldſt be apt to ſay, well done, thou good and faithful Servant, thou ſhalt have thy Wages and enter into the Cellar of thy Lord; but no Upſtair doings I beſeech thee. Thou wouldſt begin to reflect what extraordinary Services theſe forward Spokeſmen had done for thee, to preſume upon ſuch ſuperior Influence over thy affairs; eſpecially if thine own conſtant Labourers had retired contented Home: But how great muſt be your Surprize, when you diſcover that theſe forward Chaps are the Individuals that ſo often treſpaſs'd and broke down your Fences heretofore!

He that hopes no Good fears no Ill. Beware of falſe Friends who appear in Sheeps Cloathing, but are ravenous Lions at Heart. Is there a foreign or domeſtick Enemy to your Religion, an Enemy to the preſent

preſent happy Eſtabliſhment, or a Man diſappointed or diſtracted either in his Fortune or ambitious Views, but muſt all ſtruggle and combine to prevent your ſubſiding into Peace and good Order; for that only can promote your Proſperity, the contrary your Ruin. How much obliged to them are the innocent People for their Aſſiduity to keep up Diſcord and Suſpicion againſt the real and diſintereſted Friends of the Publick. Look at your real Friends, you will find them Perſons of the firſt Diſtinction, and deepeſt engaged by Property to protect and preſerve you with themſelves. Find out theſe inſidious Perſons, that pretend ſuch Friendſhip; Dare they appear in the Face of Day, or do they ſhoot their Arrows from their lurking Places. Behold the crafty Knave, cover'd up in his own Imagination, in Diſſimulation and Deceit. He wears a double Face; by Day all placid, all ſerene; but when the Hours for Deeds of Darkneſs approach, the buſy Fiend exerts his utmoſt Spite, laughs in his Spleen, and chuckles to ſee the Stubble crackle from his Fire-brand.

For Shame, for Shame! Suffer not ſuch Inſults, ſuch ſtale Devices to affront your Underſtanding. Wiſdom is repreſented as holding a Glaſs, wherein all Objects appear in their genuine Shape and Colour, it admits of no Diſguiſe; if you doubt whether to follow Truth or Deluſion, this will ſerve for a Guide. Aſk but to ſee the good they wou'd have you purſue, your real Friends with joy will ſhew it, your falſe ones have it not to ſhew.

But Friend, I muſt remark, thy Meekneſs breatheth nothing but Vengeance againſt thine Enemies, and I will join ſo far in Phraſe with thee, to ſay, may they be rewarded according to their Deſerts. But I think, tho' the Attempt was to break thy Houſe; yet they only nab'd ſome of thy Poultry. Now ſhou'd I ſeduce you and carry you in this ſame Spirit of Meekneſs to a *great Wiſe Man* of *the Law* and put all the Money you *might have been robbed* of into his Hands,

Hands, he will inſure you for your Money, the whole benefit, Myſtery and Practice of the Law, and that he will certainly hang the Thief, — in Effigie he means; for he knows the Fellow is out of his or your reach beyond Sea long ſince,—would you call me Friend for ſuch a Piece of Service? Honeſtly you muſt ſay, no. Why then may hap, Security and a contented Enjoyment of what a Man has, is better than unprofitable Revenge.

But ſuppoſe a real Friend ſhou'd not only ſecure you againſt all future Attacks, but lay out your Money ſo as to encreaſe your Eſtate, and better your Circumſtances, clear the Country of Hedge-breakers, and keep ſuch Order and Juſtice, that every Man may ſit ſecure under his own Vine; might you not in ſuch a Caſe be brought to think that there was in the World ſuch a Thing as an honeſt Man, and that ſeeing thoſe Friends that defended you in Diſtreſs, are now in Truſt and Confidence, might it not induce you to believe that all Security and Advantage may be obtained by quiet Means, without Treachery in your Friends or Knavery in their Commander.

Government is inſtituted for the benefit of the governed, when it is juſtly and truly adminiſtred, every Man reaps the Advantage. All Men can't be Miniſters of State, tho' every one thinks himſelf fit to be a Politician; and therefore, if thoſe that have proved themſelves your Friends, are not to act 'till all are pleaſed, Confuſion and Diſſention muſt be your Lot, which may be agreeable to the hot Brain of a new Patriot; but can never pleaſe ſober and honeſt Men.

Well, the Chapter of Revenge being over, will you tell your Friends honeſtly what you wou'd be at; or if you don't know yourſelf, ſhall they gueſs for you. You wou'd be rich and great, ſo wou'd we all if we cou'd: but who is to work then. I fear we muſt ſtay 'till it comes to our turn. Wou'd you make a Butcher a Biſhop, a Tinker a Lawyer, a

Sow-

Sow-gelder a General, a News-boy an Orator. If this won't do, what will? Why, that every Man may with freedom and eaſe enjoy his Rights and Station in Life; good Government alone can eſtabliſh this.

What are the neceſſary Qualifications in a good Governor? Integrity, Condeſcenſion, Honour, Juſtice and Truth: If God and the King have ſent you ſuch a Man, cheriſh him as the Apple of your Eye, Bleſs God, Honour the King and be content; for this is your Time to be happy, if you don't abuſe the Bleſſing you poſſeſs.

Your real Friend

a Free-Thinker, and

4. AP 54 Raw Politician.